

Episode 42: Processing1 – Introduction to Processing

This episode is the first podcast on the Processing Pathway. Processing involves a structured approach to helping children and youth to mentally process their incidents of problem-behaviors.

This episode introduces the concept of there being different ways that different parts of the brain process sensory data, personal experience, and the communications received from the other parts of the brain. This can result in various parts of the brain experiencing different types of confusion after a significant incident of problem-behaviors. Processing is intended to clear up that confusion. It's intended to help kids become more thoughtful people who think before they automatically react to their own strong feelings with extreme behaviors.

This is achieved through leading kids, once they are generally calm, through a structured process of analyzing their own incidents. In formal processing, there's typically a written form that guides children and youth through a meaningful way to understand an episode of problem-behaviors. The formal approach focuses on four goals: having kids own their own problem-behaviors, identifying feelings that drove those behaviors, identifying how those behaviors may have impacted people around them, and developing a plan for handling themselves better in the future. Residential

Treatment Programs are encouraged to require formal processing, at a level appropriate for each individual child, for incidents involving serious problem-behaviors such as violence, major threats, and major disruptions.

Informal processing typically doesn't use a form but has the same general goals. Informal processing makes sense for less significant problem-behaviors like instigating and refusing to follow basic program expectations. Informal processing is likely to be conducted only on a verbal level, and the counselor uses their judgement to decide how many of the four processing goals will be a focus of the conversation.